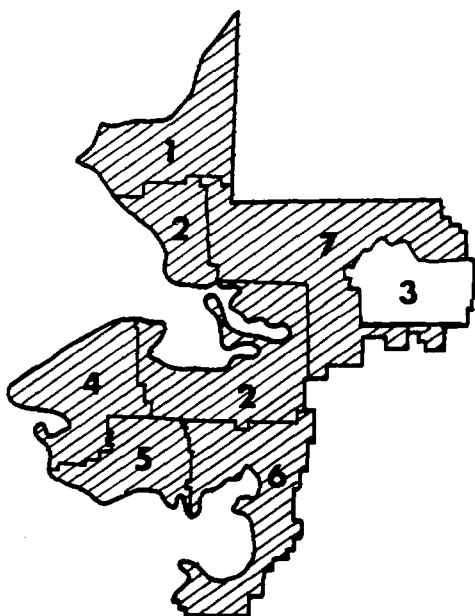


Management Unit 3: KOBUK



Background

Location and Land Ownership. The Kobuk Unit consists of lands in the upper Kobuk basin. Major drainages are the Kobuk, Ambler, Redstone, Shungnak, Kogoluktuk, Mauneluk, Pah, and Reed rivers. The unit is surrounded by four National Conservation System Units: Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Noatak National Preserve, Kobuk Valley National Park, and Selawik National Wildlife Refuge. Most of the unit is alpine tundra on the rugged mountains of the western Brooks Range. Spruce and hardwood forests are found along much of the Kobuk River and its major tributaries, with wet tundra behind the riparian forests.

About half the unit is state-owned land. There are also several blocks of state-selected lands, and extensive areas of overlapping state and Native selections. The lower stretches of the Kobuk drainage are in Native corporation ownership. Several parcels of private land exist within this unit, such as Native allotments or patented mining claims. The eastern part of the unit is federal land within the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. The Kobuk Unit is entirely within the Northwest Arctic Borough.

Resources and Land Use. Ambler, Shungnak, and Kobuk are communities within this unit. Hunting, trapping, fishing, public recreation, and mining are the major uses of the state land in this unit. Habitat in this area provides moose winter range, caribou winter range and migration routes, and fall habitat and migration routes for waterfowl. It also supports populations of anadromous and resident fish, brown bear, and in the mountains, Dall sheep. Public recreation, including camping, floating, power-boating, hiking, and winter sports, is concentrated along the Kobuk River and several of its tributaries, with more dispersed recreation in the mountains of the Brooks Range. Mining began in the Kobuk region in the late 1800s, before the gold rush to Nome. A large schist belt extending across the unit contains large reserves of copper, lead, zinc, cadmium, silver, and gold. The Ambler-Bornite mineral district has received heavy exploration effort in the past.

Access. The Kobuk region is accessible by boat along the Ambler, Kobuk, Mauneluk, and lower Pah rivers. Wheeled planes can land at community airports and mining areas, and on gravel bars along the Ambler, Kobuk, and Mauneluk rivers. Floatplanes provide access to this unit at Minakokosa, Nutuvukti, Selby, Narvak,

Norutak, Kollioksak, Anirak and Avaraart lakes, and on the Kobuk River and its major tributaries. Many trails cross this unit, including these major trails: Alatna River to Shungnak to Kotzebue; Ambler to Kotzebue, Anaktuvuk Pass, and the Redstone River; Redstone River to Cutler River; Kobuk River to Shungnak; and along the Shungnak River.

Management Intent

General. Most of the state land in this unit will be kept in public ownership and managed for multiple use. Opportunities for private use of state land will be offered through two land disposals. Nearly all state land that remains in public ownership will be kept open to new mineral entry and will remain available for leasing for coal or oil and gas. New mineral entry will not be allowed in the sheefish spawning areas along the Kobuk River. Land sale areas will be closed to mineral entry prior to disposal of the land. Shorelands will be managed consistent with the general management intent described on page 3-4.

Subunits. There are seven subunits within the Kobuk management unit: 3a (general use

uplands), 3b (mineral/habitat and harvest lands), 3c (mineral lands), 3d (habitat and harvest/recreation lands), 3e (settlement), 3f (settlement), and 3g (habitat and harvest uplands). The general management intent for these subunits is described on pages 3-4 to 3-6.

The *Resource Information Summary* chart for this unit highlights important resource values found in each subunit. The summary is based on information from various resource reports prepared for the plan (see appendices C and D).

The *Land Use Designation Summary* chart for this unit provides a quick picture of planned uses for each subunit. For a complete description of management policy, the chart must be used with the statement of management intent and the management guidelines.

Coastal Plans. Most lands in this unit are within the Northwest Arctic Borough Coastal Management Plan (CMP) boundaries. Activities on state land within this unit will be managed consistent with CMP policies. The CMP identifies three areas that have special policies for development or for habitat protection within the Kobuk Unit (see maps in Appendix J):

Important Resource Areas

Maniilaq* River/Ambler Lowlands

Selawik/Hunt/Redstone Rivers
Caribou Migration Corridor

Subunit

3a - general use uplands,
3b - minerals/habitat and harvest lands,
3f - settlement, and
3g - habitat and harvest uplands

3g - habitat and harvest uplands

Sensitive Use Areas

Kobuk River Sheefish/Whitefish
Spawning and Use Area

Subunit

3d - habitat and harvest/recreation lands

*"Maniilaq" is the regionally recognized spelling for the area noted as "Mauneluk" on the USGS quadrangle, Shungnak.

Additionally, the Ambler/Bornite Area Meriting Special Attention (AMSA) is nominated in the Northwest Arctic Borough Coastal Management Program within the Kobuk Management Unit. When an AMSA is adopted for this area, management for state land will be consistent with AMSA policies. The AMSA identified includes portions of subunits 3a, 3b, 3e, and 3g.

Management Guidelines

Commercial Recreation (Subunit 3d). *Public and Commercial Recreation* Guideline D, on page 2-23, describes state management for commercial recreation. For this subunit, this guideline prohibits commercial recreational leasing in seven sheefish spawning areas, as shown on the management unit map.

Land Disposal (Subunit 3e and 3f). Two settlement areas are designated in the Kobuk Management Unit: Kollioksak Lake (3e) will be available for a net disposal of approximately 100-200 acres of land, and Mauneluk River (3f) will be available for a net disposal of approximately 75-150 acres of land. Net acreage is the amount of land actually sold from a land offering. Gross acreage is the overall amount of land within a land offering project. For Kollioksak Lake, the gross acreage is 2,480 acres; for Mauneluk River, it is 5,320 acres.

These two settlement areas are available for selection by the Northwest Arctic Borough under the municipal entitlement program. The lands in the borough are subject to the platting, subdividing, and zoning laws of the Northwest Arctic Borough.

These two land disposals will be deferred for five years after adoption of this area plan or until the Northwest Arctic Borough completes its comprehensive plan, whichever comes first. Special management guidelines apply to settlement areas. In particular, refer to the guidelines for *Lakeshore Management* (page 2-15) for the Kollioksak Lake disposal, and *Stream Corridors and Instream Flow* (page 2-39) for the Mauneluk River disposal.

Selections (Subunits 3a, 3b and 3g). The state should topfile on two Native selections east of Ambler (in five townships) to consolidate ownership if the land is not conveyed to the Native corporation. These proposed selections have high mineral, habitat, and human use values.

Sheefish Spawning Areas (Subunit 3d). The seven sheefish spawning areas identified on the management unit map are the only known and documented spawning sites for sheefish in the Kobuk River basin. Fish from these sites are important for subsistence and sport fisheries in the Kobuk River basin. For these seven sites, the bed of the Kobuk River and adjacent state land within 200 feet either side of the ordinary high water mark of the river will be closed to new mineral entry to protect sheefish production. These areas are shown on the *Subsurface Designation Summary Map*, page 2-51, and in detail in Appendix H, *Mineral Orders for the Northwest Area Plan*.

General. The complete set of areawide guidelines is presented in Chapter 2. The *Resource Information Summary* charts for this unit identify important trails, known or probable heritage sites, and other resource values in specific subunits that are addressed by the appropriate guidelines in Chapter 2. Any Chapter 2 guidelines could apply to certain uses within this management unit. Those most likely to apply are:

- Coordination and public notice
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Forestry
- Heritage resources
- Lakeshore management
- Public access
- Public and commercial recreation
- Remote cabins and trapping cabins
- Settlement
- Stream corridors and instream flow
- Subsurface resources
- Trail management

RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 3: Kobuk - Page 1 of 2

RESOURCE	SUBUNIT			
	3a	3b	3c	3d
Fire Protection	Modified	Modified	Modified	Modified
Fish and Wildlife	Mostly B2 (moose, brown bear, caribou). Some C in high areas.	Mostly A2/B1 for moose (winter range), ducks, geese, caribou (migration), resident fish, Dall sheep (headwaters), brown bear; some B2.	Mostly B2 (moose, brown bear, caribou). Some C in high areas.	A1 in sheefish spawning areas; rest A2/B1: winter moose range, caribou winter range and migration, anadromous and resident fish, ducks & geese (fall and migration), brown bear.
Forestry	Spruce and hardwoods in patches along major streams.	Spruce and hardwoods in patches along major streams.	Spruce and hardwoods in patches along major streams.	Spruce and hardwoods in patches along major streams.
Heritage Resources	Unknown	Known sites on upper Shungnak and at Avaraart Lake.	Unknown	Known sites along Kobuk R.
Important Trails	None identified.	Ambler to Anaktuvuk Pass trail; Shungnak River trail; Mauneluk river trail.	None identified.	Alatna - Shungnak - Kotzebue trail.
Minerals	Mixed: low to very high; very low at Bismark Mt.; numerous mining claims.	High to very high. Major mining district with world class deposits and reserves.	High to very high; numerous claims; known reserves.	Low to moderate; one mining claim.
Oil & Gas	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown.
Public Access	Floatplane to Lake Minakokosa and Nutuvukti Lake.	Road to upper Shungnak; floatplane to Avaraart Lake; wheelplane along Ambler R. gravel bars; boat on Ambler R. & Mauneluk R.	None identified.	Floatplane and wheelplane landing along Kobuk; boat on Kobuk R. and Pah R.;
Recreation	High value at Lake Minakokosa.	Floating, dogsledding, hiking and camping along Ambler River and Avaraart Lake. Camping, dogsledding and hiking along Kogoluktuk and Mauneluk rivers. Floating potential along Beaver Creek and Reed R.	Unknown	Floating and camping along Kobuk R.
Reindeer Grazing	None	None	None	None
Settlement Suitability	Some low and moderate; mostly unsuitable.	Some low & moderate along access routes; mostly unsuitable; incapable along active floodplains.	Unsuitable	Mostly high, moderate, and low; incapable along active floodplain; rest unsuitable.
Subsistence	Subsistence use in this unit has been documented by studies of the DF&G, Subsistence Division, for the communities of Ambler, Anaktuvuk, Buckland, Kiana, Kobuk, Noatak, Noorvik, Selawik, and Shungnak. Subsistence use by other communities--such as Kotzebue--is known to exist, but the extent of their use has not been documented in studies for the NWAP.			

See Appendix C for a list of reports with more detailed information, and Appendix D for definition of ratings.

RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 3: Kobuk - Page 2 of 2

RESOURCE		SUBUNIT	
	3e	3f	3g
Fire Protection	Modified	Modified	Modified
Fish and Wildlife	Mostly B2 (moose, brown bear and caribou); A2 (above value plus ducks, geese, resident fish); some C (brown bear in mountains).	Mostly B1, (ducks, geese, caribou, moose, brown bear); some A2 in southern part, (moose and caribou winter range and migration, anadromous and resident fish).	Mostly B-1 for moose, Dall sheep, brown bear, caribou (migration, winter range). Some A2 along Redstone R. and Miluet Creek and upper extensions of tributaries for Shungnak R.; ducks and geese; resident fish.
Forestry	Spruce and hardwoods in patches along major streams.	Spruce and hardwoods in patches along major streams.	Spruce and hardwoods in patches along major streams.
Heritage Resources	Unknown	Unknown	Known sites around Norutak Lake and along Kobuk River; probable sites in Ambler River corridor.
Important Trails	None identified.	Mauneluk River trail.	Ambler - Anaktuvuk Pass trail; Redstone R. to Cutler R. trail; Ambler to Redstone R. trail; Kobuk R. to Shungnak trail; Shungnak R. trail; Mauneluk R. trail.
Minerals	Moderate	Low to moderate	Most moderate to high; some low south of Lockwood Hills and near Akiluik Mountain; numerous mining claims.
Oil & Gas	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Public Access	Lake landing	Wheelplane landing along Mauneluk R; boat on Mauneluk R.	Road to upper Shungnak; wheelstrip at Bornite, floatplane to Norutak; boat on Ambler and Mauneluk Rivers.
Recreation	Hiking, camping, floating	Boating, camping	Boating and camping along Ambler River and upper tributaries; camping and hiking along Redstone Creek and between Shungnak and Kogoluktuk Rivers.
Reindeer Grazing	None	None	None
Settlement Suitability	Moderate along lake; remainder of land surface low.	Moderate and active floodplain (incapable).	Low and moderate within one mile of access points and remainder of unit unsuitable. Some incapable in active floodplains.
Subsistence	Subsistence use in this unit has been documented by studies of the DF&G, Subsistence Division, for the communities of Ambler, Anaktuvuk, Buckland, Kiana, Kobuk, Noatak, Noorvik, Selawik, and Shungnak. Subsistence use by other communities--such as Kotzebue--is known to exist, but the extent of their use has not been documented in studies for the NWAP.		

See Appendix C for a list of reports with more detailed information, and Appendix D for definition of ratings.

LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

MANAGEMENT UNIT 3 - KOBUK

SUBUNIT	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS			COMMENTS
	PRIMARY SURFACE USE ¹	PROHIBITED SURFACE USE ²	SUBSURFACE ³	
3a	General use uplands	Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	Portions of two townships near Shungnak River proposed for state selection
3b	Minerals/ Habitat & harvest lands	Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	Portions of township north of Ambler River proposed for state selection
3c	Mineral lands	Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	
3d	Habitat & harvest/ Recreation lands	Land disposals Remote cabins Commercial rec. leases in some areas	Open, except at sheefish spawning areas	
3e	Settlement	Remote Cabins	Closed prior to sale	Kollioksak Lake 100-200 net acres
3f	Settlement	Remote Cabins	Closed prior to sale	Mauneluk River 75-100 net acres
3g	Habitat & harvest uplands	Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	Large block east of Ambler River and a small area north of Ambler River proposed for state selection

¹Secondary uses include: forestry in all subunits, remote cabins in portions of subunit 3a and 3g, and recreation in all subunits except 3c. For more details see the Resource Information Summary for this unit, and Appendix D.

²Other uses such as material sales, land leases, or permits, that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement, the management guidelines of this unit, and the relevant management guidelines listed in Chapter 2.

³All areas are available for leasing for leasable minerals. Statements of whether or not the unit is open to mineral entry refer only to locatable minerals. See glossary in Appendix A for definitions of leasable and locatable minerals. See Appendix H for detailed descriptions of areas closed to mineral entry.

KOBUK

